TWO HUNDRED SUMMERS IN A CITY

EDINBURGH 1767–1967 · SOUVENIR PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

TWO HUNDRED SUMMERS IN A CITY

Edinburgh New Town

Bicentenary Celebration 1767 – 1967

Sponsored by

The City and Royal Burgh of Edinburgh

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Two Hundred Summers in a City Exhibition

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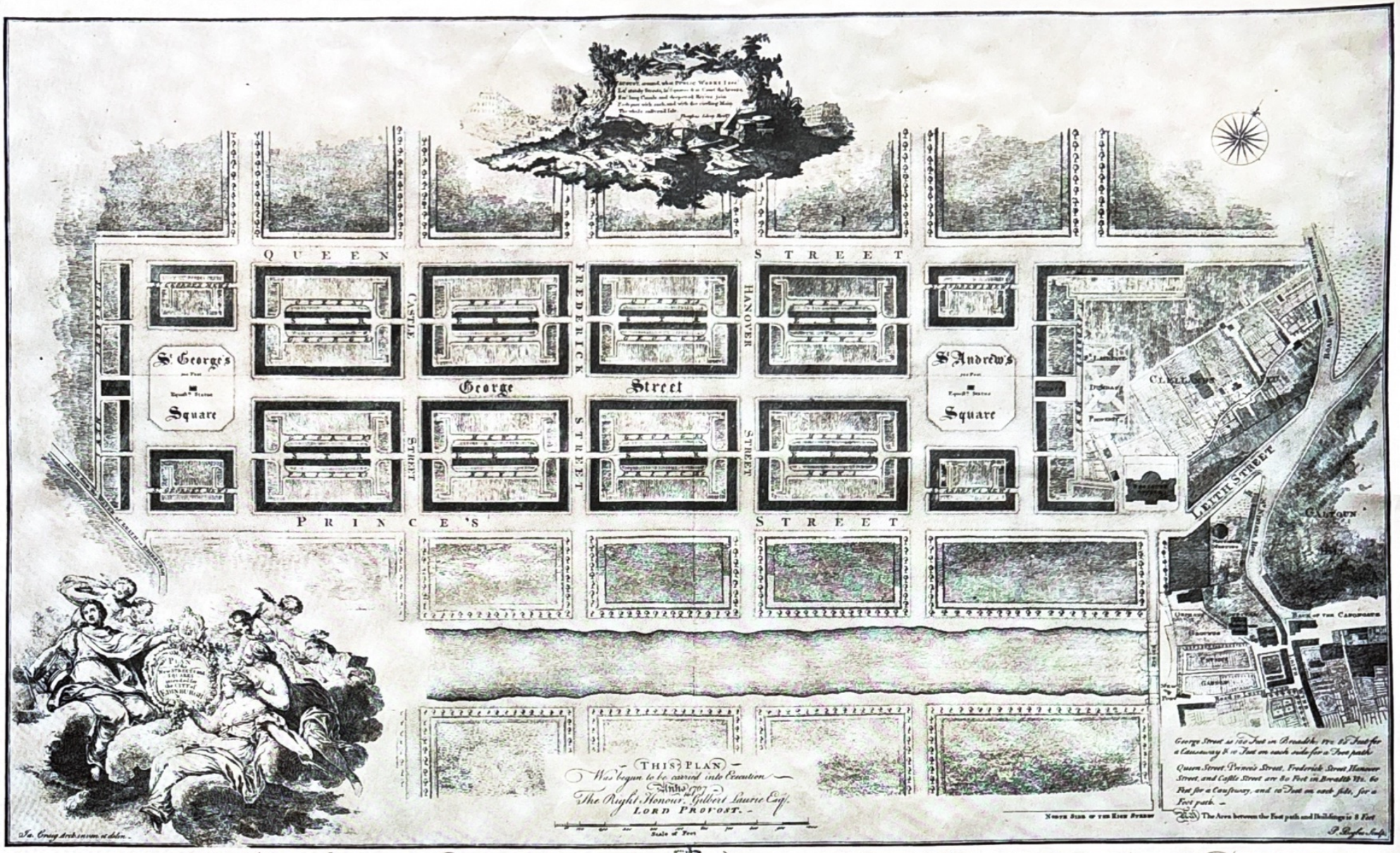

QUEEN STREET
CASTLE STREET
FREDERICK STREET
HANOVER STREET
PRINCE'S STREET
George Street
S.t George's Square
S.t Andrew's Square
LEITH STREET
CALTON
THIS PLAN
Was begun to be carried into Execution
Anno 1767
The Right Honour.e Gilbert Laurie Esq.r
LORD PROVOST.
Scale of Feet
George Street 80 Feet in Breadth, with 65 Feet for a Causeway 8 to Feet on each side for a Foot path.
Queen Street, Prince's Street, Frederick Street, Hanover Street, and Castle Street are 80 Feet in Breadth viz. 60 Feet for a Carriage way, and 10 Feet on each side, for a Foot path.
The Area between the Foot path and Buildings is 8 Feet
Ja. Craig direb. invent. et delin.
P. Fourdrinier Sculp.

To His Sacred Majesty GEORGE III. The Munificent Patron of Every POLITE and LIBERAL This PLAN of the New Streets and Squares, intended for His ancient CAPITAL of NORTH-BRITAIN; One of the happy Consequences of the Peace, Security, and Liberty his People enjoy, under his mild, and auspicious Government, Is, with the utmost Humility Inscribed By His Majesty's Most devoted Servant and Subject, JAMES CRAIG.

Published according to Act of Parliament June 1768.

James Craig's winning plan for the New Town of Edinburgh 1767

TWO HUNDRED SUMMERS IN A CITY

The Royal Exchange now the City Chambers.
John Adam's original design 1753

Our Entertainment Celebrates One Part of the Story of Edinburgh City.

A period of time which started 200 years ago in July 1767, when the City Magistrates and Council selected from six competitors a plan to build a New Town for Edinburgh. The plan was drawn by James Craig. This 'New Town of Edinburgh' was to become Britain's most superb example of classical town planning layout.

But our story is not as simple as that. Its beginning belongs to the time when the old medieval city was built along the ridge of rock beneath the Castle and the story ending, part of another beginning, is the history we now make. For today the classical meaning of the City hangs in delicate balance.

James Craig, an architect who was at the outset of his career, (**a**) *and George Drummond (who had died in December* 1766), *six times Lord Provost of the City* (**b**). *Let these two men represent the hundred, the thousand, who were to contribute from that summer of* 1767 *to the sudden flowering of their City. A technician and a skilled administrator; two artists who set the scene for the creation of the New Town.*

And how was it that the City Community should make up its mind to plan and then diligently build to that plan for over 70 years? What were the subtle human inter-relationships which made this possible? How was the quality of the endeavour maintained? How did the mean, the stupid, the dishonest, the venal, the philistine try but fail to destroy the character of the Old Town or the splendour of the New? How was it that the environment which was made, fostered too Edinburgh's social and intellectual golden age when the City became known as the Athens of the North?

Our celebration sketches many interlocking phases of the building of the 18th century city and projects these back into the Old Town and forward into the city we may see, inhabit and use today. The stage sets of buildings, plans, pictures and people, and the words we use are an attempt to recreate this image of a city story.

We need to re-define values in city making for we live in a world which is inescapably urban. Does not the city still represent the physical organisation of an urban society and is not Edinburgh New Town unique? What value must we place on it? What may we learn from its example? How may we shape its future? This is for you to decide.

Our first pavilion, a giant toy theatre, is like the one Robert Louis Stevenson immortalised in his essay 'Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured'. *It is the Heart of Midlothian scene: a close off the High Street at night; a pattern of high roofs stands against the sky; small distorted windows spill coloured light on to the ground.....*

James Craig 1744–95

George Drummond 1687–1766

Right: St. Giles and Parliament Square in the Old Town (engraving)

The text of this programme is divided into two parts. On the left in the larger type is a broad description of what is portrayed by the sequences of our Entertainment. In this column we give you, in the form of notes, more detail about the places and people, about books and prints and the other sources we have used.

Many books have been written about the period of our celebration. The Library and Museums Committee of Edinburgh Corporation published this year an annotated bibliography, 'Edinburgh 1767–1967'. Our own choice of five books in print is:

This is Edinburgh by Miroslav Sasek, W. H. Allen, 1961. A picture book for young children.

Edinburgh by J. B. Barclay. Adam and Chas. Black, 1965. A book of facts, dates and pictures for the older child.

Edinburgh by George Scott Moncrieff. Batsford, 1965. A gentle history of the town and its people.

Edinburgh: Scotland's Capital. Edited by R. C. L. Lorimer. Oliver & Boyd, 1967. A lavish picture book.

The Making of Classical Edinburgh, 1750–1840 by A. J. Youngson. Edinburgh University Press, 1966. A splendid and detailed account supported by brilliant photographs.

(**a**) James Craig was 23 when his New Town plan was accepted. He died in 1795 and his grave was unmarked in Greyfriars Churchyard until this year when the City placed a simple plaque above it. 'This ingenious and accomplished architect, in the later part of his life was not successful, his remuneration being but slender, he appears to have died in rather poor circumstances.' (Scottish Register, 1796.) It was said that he lacked tact and too quickly wished to emulate the success story of his uncle, the poet Thomson. He was to prove himself a better planner than architect; but he lived when the need for such a separate skill was hardly foreseen.

(**b**) 'Great Drummond improveth what nature doth send.' George Drummond, a Protestant, was born in Perthshire in 1687. He spent his life in and working for Edinburgh. From what we have learnt of him his career was distinguished and his nature direct and honest and he was universally respected. He believed in the growth and development of his city and he may have founded the city's policies of buying land on which the new

'*In general the highest and lowest tenements are possessed by the artificers, while the gentry and better sort of people dwell in fifth and sixth storeys. Sedan chairs bourne by Highland chairmen of superior respectability, carry the gentry about the streets. It is difficult not to notice in the evening the pervading odour of these populous and insanitary buildings*.' Darkness too gives the inhabitants the chance to throw their slops out of the windows, as Dr. Johnson was to remark, '*many a full flowing periwig moistened in the flaccid heat*' (**c**).

The pattern of the Old Town is tightly contained within city walls on its rock ridge. It was built so for many good reasons which are part of the history of Scotland. The insecurity of the nation encouraged the huddling together of this Old Town of Edinburgh. So those who lived there came to accept an urban way of life. High flats, piled one upon the other—the Lands, a long central street which was a promenade. The promenade for walking about, for transacting business well within the security of the city. Such a situation continued longer in Scotland than it did in England. So even in the 18th century, the Old Town maintained greater similarities to the ancient idea of the cities of Europe. This acceptance of a particular way of urban living was to have a profound effect both on the design of the New Town and on public attitude to its making.

It was therefore Scotland's turbulent history which did not encourage its capital to spread. Nor did the topography of its site, but by the 18th century, after union with England and the final suppression of the Jacobite cause, circumstances leading to a slow growth of prosperity made it possible for the stage to be set for the awakening of the New Town and of the society that was to live in it.

The change from the Old to the New Town was indeed dramatic and you will see the plans and drawings which show this great difference. '*Look at these fields*,' said Provost Drummond, '*you Mr. Somerville are a young man and may probably live, though I will not, to see all these fields covered with houses, forming a splendid and magnificent City. To the accomplishment of this nothing more is necessary than draining the North Loch and providing proper access from the Old Town* (**d**). The proper access was the North Bridge. The bridge took seven years to build and was opened for traffic in 1772. The start of the bridge building precipitated the need immediately to make a plan for the city's extension.

For years Provost Drummond had worked to extend the city. He attributed the original idea to the late King James II who when staying (as the Duke of York) at Holyrood, had waved his imperial hand in the general direction of the New Town site. More prophetically the exiled Earl of Mar described in 1728 his ideal of a new town for Edinburgh which was very close to its final form.

The great idea was written into *The Proposals* (**e**) published in 1752 to gain support for the extension of the Royalty of Edinburgh (that is the city boundaries), and to build public buildings and other useful and ornamental accommodation in the city. This remarkable document was a policy statement of good intentions which, in time, were to be honoured by the deeds of the city as it came to be built.

The most ambitious intention was that of extending the city boundary—the Royalty. It was to be a New Town. Not 'New' as we understand the term now but rather a town expansion scheme, the first of four major planning proposals for this part of the town.

Its contemporary relevance may be the way in which free and municipal enterprise town was to be built and of helping to form the written *Proposals* of 1752. (*See 'George Drummond: an eighteenth century Lord Provost'. Vol 4*, 1911. *Old Edinburgh Club*.)

But before we consider these *Proposals* we need to know more about the old town—old by the 18th century.

Fynes Moryson, a traveller wrote this description of the old town in 1598:

'And so . . . (I) came to Edenborow . . . This city is high seated in a fruitful soyle and wholsome aire, and is adorned with many Noblemen's Towers lying about it, and aboundeth with many springs of sweet waters. At the end, towards the East, is the King's Pallace, ioyning to the Monastry of the Holy Cross, which King Dauid the first built; ouer which, in a Parke of Hares, Conies, and Deare, an high mountaine hangs, called the Chaire of Arthur . . . From the Kings Pallace at the East, the City still riseth higher and higher towards the West, and consists especially of one broad and very faire street (which is the greatest part and sole ornament thereof), the rest of the side streetes and allies being of poore building, and inhabited with very poore people; and the length from the East to the West is about a mile, whereas the bredth of the City from the North to the South is narrow, and cannot be halfe a mile. At the furthest end, towards the West, is a very strong Castle . . . And from this Castle, towards the West, is a most steepe Rocke pointed on the highest top, out of which this Castle is cut; but on the North and South sides, without the wals, lie plaine and fruitfull fields of corne. . . . The houses are built of vnpolished stone, and in the faire street a good part of them is of free stone, which in that broad streete would make a faire shew, but that the outsides of them are faced with wooden galleries, built vpon the second story of the houses . . .'

Compare this description with that written by Arnot in his *City of Edinburgh*, published in 1788:

Above: the North Prospect of the City of Edinburgh (engraving c. 1690)
Below: buildings in the Old Town (engraving by W. Geikie 1829)
Above right: the Old Town. Libberton Wynd from the Cowgate (engraving by W. Geikie 1830)
Right: the North Bridge links the New Town to the Old (detail from engraving)

'The ground upon which [Edinburgh] is built is perhaps as singular, and in many respects inconvenient, as can well be figured. The Palace of Holyroodhouse, the eastmost boundary of the city, stands on a plain within two miles of the river Forth, from which it rises by a gradual ascent of ninety-four feet from the high water-mark. From Holyrood-house there begins the narrow point, or, if we may be allowed the expression, the tail of a hill, which gradually extending itself in breadth, rises in a steep and straight ridge, from which its shelving sides decline; the ridge terminating in an abrupt precipice, the site of the castle, at a distance of a mile in length, and one hundred and eighty feet in heighth from Holyrood-house.

The ridge of the hill forms a continued and very magnificent street. From its sides, lanes and alleys, which are there called *wynds and closes*, extend like slanting ribs; so that, upon the whole, it bears a striking resemblance to a turtle, of which the castle is the head, the high street the ridge of the back, the *wynds and closes* the shelving sides, and the palace of Holyroodhouse the tail.

The declivity of the hill upon the south is terminated by a level strip, on which the street called the *Cowgate* is built; thence the ground rises precipitately to the south, and terminates in a plain. Upon the north the descent from the high-street is steeper, and more profound. It is bounded by an inconsiderable morass, which formerly being overflowed, formed a lake called the *North-loch*, from the north-side of which a bank rises, and spreads itself into a level field, constituting the area of the extended royalty.'

(c) *A. Topham. Letters from Edinburgh* (*London, 1776*). This and Dr. Johnson's remark are quoted in '*Edinburgh the Golden Age 1769–1832*', *by Michael Joyce, published Longmans Green, London, 1951.*

(d) *Thomas Somerville, 'My Own Life and Times 1741–1814'.*

The likelihood of these subsequent events being achieved may have seemed remote at the time, for under a series of Acts affecting the City of Edinburgh, retiring members of the City Council chose their successors; thus the citizen had no right to vote for its rulers. Moreover 'When any public work was to be undertaken a preference was to be given to councillors as a matter of course; and the same favour was extended in respect of public appointments'. It was Edinburgh's strange fortune that this system sometimes produced men of resolve and integrity like Provost Drummond, who do not seem to have abused the power they had, good fortune too that where there was public corruption it was noticed and vigorously opposed.

(e) *THE PROPOSALS*

'The Magistrates and Town Council, the College of Justice and several persons of rank who happened to be in the neighbourhood of this place propose,

1. To build an Exchange upon the ruins on the north side of the High Street,

2. To erect upon the ruins in Parliament Close a building for Law Courts, the Town Council, several Registers, the Advocates' Library, etc.

3. To obtain an Act of Parliament for extending the Royalty to enlarge and beautify the Town by opening new streets to the north and south, removing the Markets and Shambles and turning the North Loch into a canal with walks and terraces on each side,

4. That the expense of these Public Works should be defrayed by the National Contribution.'

combined with a community commitment to a disciplined plan. The *scale* of the project was made possible because the Corporation had already bought the land on which the development was to take place.

So it came about that the city advertised a Planning Competition: 'The person whose plan shall be judged most proper shall receive the reward of merit, a gold medal with an impression of the Arms of the City of Edinburgh and the Freedom of the City in a silver box.'

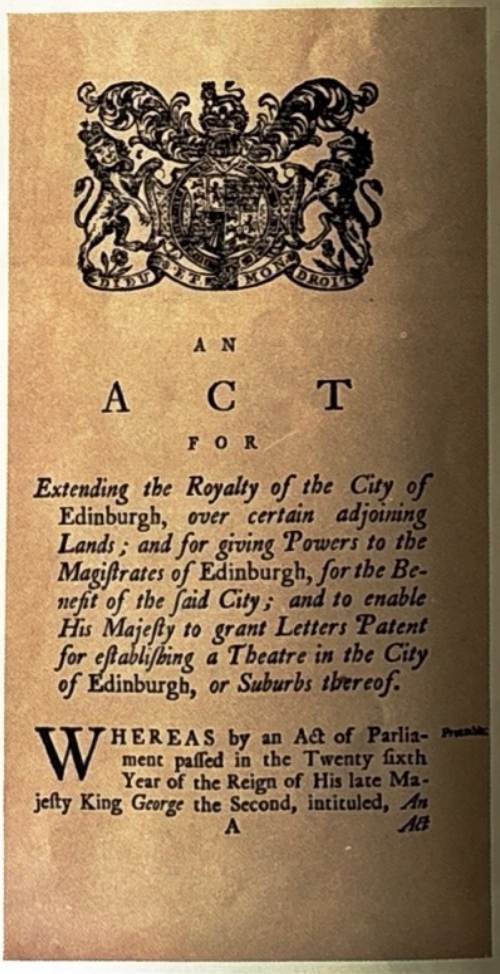
James Craig's plan was finally accepted in July 1767. Neither the names nor the plans of the other six competitors were ever revealed. His plan is simple and straightforward (**f**). It seems as if it has nothing to do with the land-form on which it was to be built, but, when one looks closely at it, when one analyses the attitude to urban living which already existed in Edinburgh, it contains all the seeds of its future success.

There are the two simple Squares and the open-sided Queen and Princes Streets. There are the prospects of the countryside to the north of the town and of the countryside to the south of the town. There is the great new promenade street to be built up on one side only which allows the northern sunlight to shine on a public concourse. There too is all the opportunity for an emerging middle-class with slowly increasing economic resources to indulge in building and bettering themselves; in making a new social life for themselves.

The original intention of the Corporation was only to build houses, and George Street, the central avenue connecting the two squares was planned as the most *important* street.

Time and the changing needs of the city were soon to modify the original idea to make Princes Street a shopping promenade and a banking and commercial square of St. Andrew.

The business of building the New Town was to prove less easy than the making of a paper master plan, but in 1767 and 1768 the need of the Corporation was to popularise their scheme of the New Town and to attract people across the Nor' Loch to build it. They dared not speculate by building themselves but they did make simple planning rules; for example, pavements were to be ten feet wide, laid at the householder's expense; there was to be a uniform building line; signs were not to project from walls; 'as people's taste in building is so different, any person should



AN

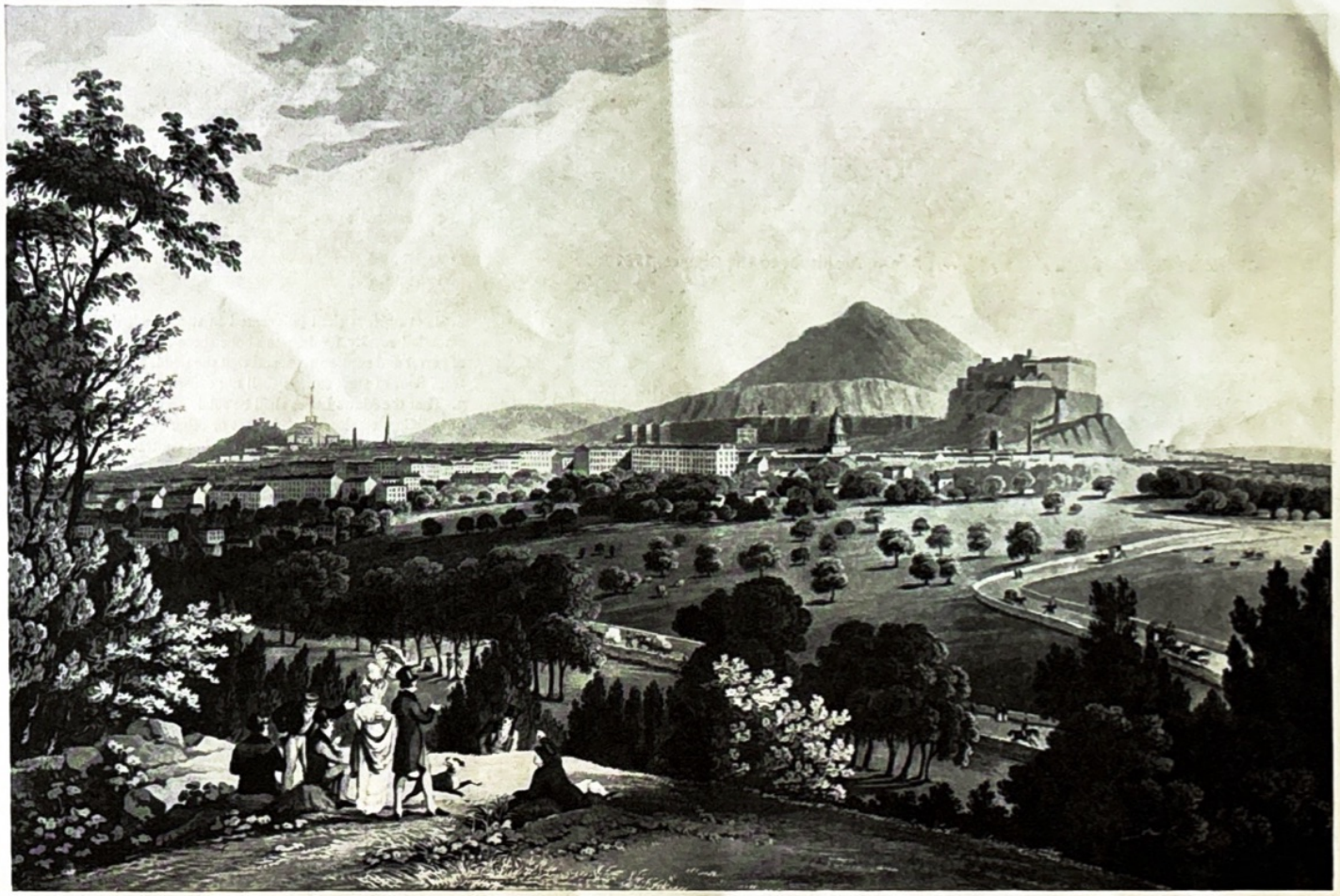
ACT

FOR

Extending the Royalty of the City of Edinburgh, *over certain adjoining Lands; and for giving Powers to the Magiſtrates of* Edinburgh, *for the Benefit of the ſaid City; and to enable His Majeſty to grant Letters Patent for eſtabliſhing a Theatre in the City of* Edinburgh, *or Suburbs thereof.*

WHEREAS by an Act of Parliament paſſed in the Twenty ſixth Year of the Reign of His late Majeſty King *George* the Second, intituled, *An Act*

Private



be allowed to take so many feet in front as they choose'. On the Corporation's part they undertook to build sewers and roads and a new reservoir.

These years might be termed the critical, difficult, permissive years, when the confidence of the Town Council in the ultimate success of their visionary plan was possibly at its lowest, when the temptation to depart from the discipline of their ordered plan was at its highest, for the mud and spoil of the road and sewer work and the builders' rubble of the first few adventurous developers would seem far away from the promise of *The Proposals* or the neatness of Craig's plan. Worse still, the new bridge, the vital link with the Old Town, was partly to collapse in 1769. Only the Theatre Royal stood complete at one side of the head of the bridge which '*produces the double effect of disgusting spectators by its own deformity and obstructing the view of the* (*incomplete*) *Register Office*' (Arnot).

There were other crises. There blossomed in the place of honour at the head of St. Andrew Square, reserved for the New Town's first and most important church, a large and splendid mansion house. No one quite knows how or why, but this piece of land was quietly feued (**g**) to the adjoining owner. It was Edinburgh's good fortune that he chose to build so fittingly and well (what is now the Royal Bank of Scotland).

Less happily, the Corporation began to feu the land on the south side of Princes Street, and to this day that draughty part of the street remains in the gloom and shadow of the North British Hotel, as a constant reminder of how the whole street might have looked had cupidity then triumphed.

We owe our gratitude to fourteen of the first feuars in the New Town, who had come to live in the New Town because they understood that '*no buildings were to be erected to the south of Princes Street, which means that the proprietors of houses on that street in particular, would enjoy advantages which they considered as of greatest value, viz, free air and an agreeable prospect. While, on the other hand, the fine opening from the City upon that street gave at once an idea of the beauty and elegance of the general design, it was therefore a matter of just surprise to the feuars when they came to learn, that the Town Council, or persons acting by their authority, had sold a large spot of ground southward of Princes Street, and to the west of the bridge for the acknowledged purpose of building houses, making a coach yard, wright shops and the like.*'

It was no easy task to alter the present intentions of the Town Council, but the

Left: the great design realised—and modified by time. Princes Street in the late 1820's. Already it is a street of shops, hotels and a promenade. The Royal Institution, now the Royal Scottish Academy, is being built; the gardens have yet to be made (engraving)
Below left: title page of the Act to extend the 'Royalty' of Edinburgh
Above: the ideal of the 18th and 19th centuries; the city set in contrast to a well managed countryside. The New Town and the city from the north-west, drawn 'on the spot' by J. Clark in 1824

(f) 'Utterly destitute of any inventive ingenuity, any regard for the natural features of the ground', so the Dictionary of National Biography describes Craig's plan, but such criticism of the plan was common during the last hundred years when romantic, so-called natural disorder in town building, providing it was cleared of certain social evils, was much preferred to classical simplicity.

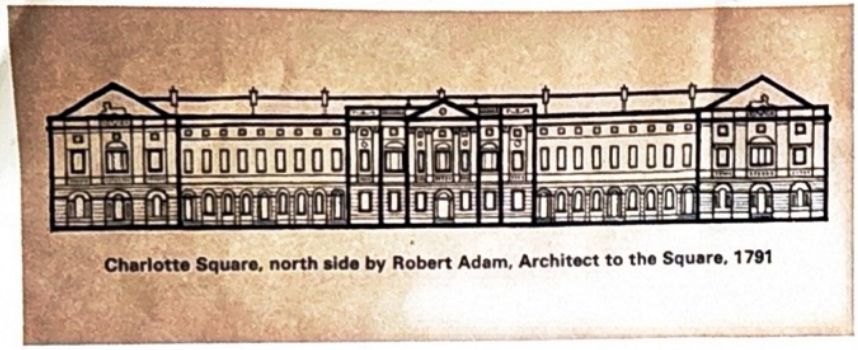
'Our escape from the old town gave us an unfortunate propensity to avoid whatever had distinguished the place we had fled from. Thence we were led into the blunder of long straight lines of street, . . . What a site did nature give us for our New Town! Yet what insignificance in its plan! What poverty in all its details.'

So thought Henry, Lord Cockburn, who was born in 1779 and died in 1854. A great man of Edinburgh, Solicitor-General of Britain; the book 'Memorials of His Times' was published by his executors, in 1865. We shall quote again from this work. The 'Cockburn Association' strives to this day to make Edinburgh a greater city.

But not all Victorians had such a poor opinion of the New Town. Robert Louis Stevenson said this:

'It is as much a matter of course to decry the New Town as to exalt the Old; and the most celebrated authorities have picked out this quarter as the very emblem of what is condemnable in architecture. Much may be said, much indeed has been said, upon the text; but to the unsophisticated, who call anything pleasing, if only it pleases them, the New Town of Edinburgh seems, in itself, not only gay and airy, but highly picturesque.'

(g) Feu; the feudal system of land rights in Scotland 'practically meant perpetuity of possession'. 'The grantor of each feudal right is called the Superior and the grantee the Vassal or Feuar. The Superior, in granting the feu, imposes conditions in regard to the buildings which the Feuar proposes to erect on the land



Charlotte Square, north side by Robert Adam, Architect to the Square, 1791

objectors were men of principle and resolve. Twice the case went to the House of Lords and in March 1776, the land of the North Loch, as far as Hanover Street, was to be kept and preserved in perpetuity as open space. Thus was the seal set on the successful building of the New Town.

Now the resolve of the Corporation to live up to their good intentions stiffened. In 1782 stricter planning regulations were made for the New Town (**h**), for too much freedom to build what anyone wanted had, paradoxically, only produced a degree of architectural monotony.

With the exception of a few expensively adorned homes, the first houses of the New Town were exceedingly plain and unsophisticated, just within the capabilities of very ordinary builders and very plain clients, but for Edinburgh it was an age of awakening and of growing confidence.

'*The spirit for improvement is fully exhibited in Edinburgh, but it is to be lamented that in many instances it has not been under better regulation* (**i**). By 1782, the appeal of the New Town had become established. There was greater confidence in its ultimate success. It was the moment to demand better standards.

From now on exterior control stiffened but if anything, interior variety, ingenuity of planning vastly increased. Confidence and skill to build, more money to build were becoming available to more people. There was now a distinct social impetus to abandon the Old for the New Town. So, the second square, Charlotte Square, unlike St. Andrew Square, was built to uniform elevation designs made by the great Robert Adam.

This Square, the north side of which remains to this day as Adam designed it, was building by the end of the century, thus completing the first stage of the New Town, which therefore had taken a quarter of a century to build.

And this New Town was made up predominantly of houses. One house only, may be considered as a separate house. It was built for Sir Laurence Dundas, designed by Sir William Chambers and was not to remain a private house for long. In 1794 it became the principal office of Excise for the Government, and in 1824 it was sold to the Royal Bank of Scotland.

St. Andrew's Church in George Street was built on another site, in 1783, to a beautiful design made by architect David May who collaborated with a gifted amateur 'Captain Fraser' (**j**).

On the other side of the street there was also built, to the design of James Craig, the Physicians' Hall (**k**) and close by, the Assembly Rooms.

The other great building was Register House, designed by James and Robert Adam, which stood at the head of the North Bridge. This splendid building to contain the National Records of Scotland, was part of the first proposals for the city. Its foundation stone was laid in 1774. Built by money secured from the Exchequer, it was not even partly to be completed before 1784, gaining in that time the nickname of the 'most magnificent pigeon house in Europe'.

What, then, had been achieved in the twenty-five years since the day when the Town Council accepted James Craig's plan for the New Town?

James Craig achieved little success after making his plan for Edinburgh, mostly, it is said, because of the insensitive handling of his patrons. The remarkable thing is, that by the end of the century his plan had, more or less, been completed and whatever the feelings of the Council may have been in some of the darker economic days of that preceding quarter century, they were not sufficient to stop the impetus of the plan for making the costly new roads, sewers and a new water supply. All this the Council undertook. It would seem almost that this impetus was, in the end, the final arbiter and even the Council themselves found that they did not wish to depart from its intentions and principles. Moreover, they were busily involving themselves in grander, more ambitious and costlier schemes.

feued, and states other terms of tenure, one of those being the payment of an annual feu-duty which normally remains a constant amount. These conditions and terms, unless waived by the Superior, continue for all time and, so long as they are fulfilled, the feuar enjoys exclusive possession of the lands feued to him, with all the rights and obligations usually pertaining to ownership of property. . . .' *Principles of the Law in Scotland, Bell.*

(**h**) The principal clauses of the Acts of 1782, 1785:

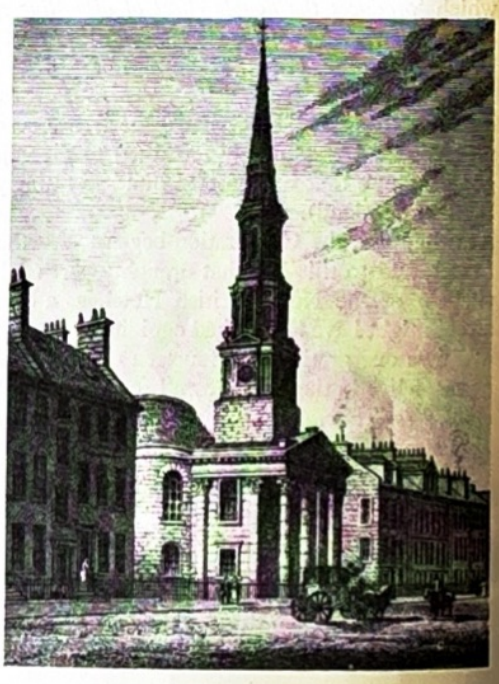
1. When any application is given to the Council for feu, the same to be remitted to a committee, but the committee to make no report thereupon, nor is the feu to be granted, until such time as a plan and elevation of the intended building, signed by the person applying, be given into the committee and approved by them.
2. That no feus shall be granted in the principal streets of the extended royalty for houses above three storeys high, exclusive of garret and sunk storeys, and that the whole height of side walls from floor of sunk storeys shall not exceed 48 feet.
3. That the Mews Lanes shall be solely appropriated for purpose of building, stables, coach houses or other offices.
4. That every person or persons acting contrary to all or any of these regulations, shall be bound to pay . . . the sum of £30 of additional purchase money, besides being liable in damages, and repairing his or her transgression.
5. That in all time coming every person who obtains a feu in the extended royalty shall be bound to build thereon, within one year from obtaining the feu, otherwise he shall not only forfeit the same, but also be liable in payment of £30 sterling.

(**i**) J. Farrington, unprinted notebook in the Edinburgh Room of Edinburgh Central Public Library.

(**j**) The later steeple was designed by the architect, Sibbald.

(**k**) The building was demolished 60 years later. The only building by Craig, still to be seen in Edinburgh, is the quaint old observatory on Calton Hill.

Above: H.M. Register House by James and Robert Adam, 1774.
Below: St. Andrew's Church in George Street—no graveyard and not at the end of the grand vista (engraving)
Opposite: the drawing-room at No. 6 Charlotte Square *(photo Edwin Smith)*



'*The Council Chamber . . . very dark, and very dirty.*

'*Within this pandemonium sat the town council, omnipotent, corrupt, impenetrable. Nothing was beyond its grasp; no variety of opinion disturbed its unanimity . . . silent, powerful, submissive, mysterious, and irresponsible, they might have been sitting in Venice. About the year 1799 a solitary schism amazed the public, by disclosing the incredible fact that the town council might contain a member who had an opinion of his own. A councillor, named Smith, electrified the city by a pamphlet showing that the city was bankrupt.*' (**l**).

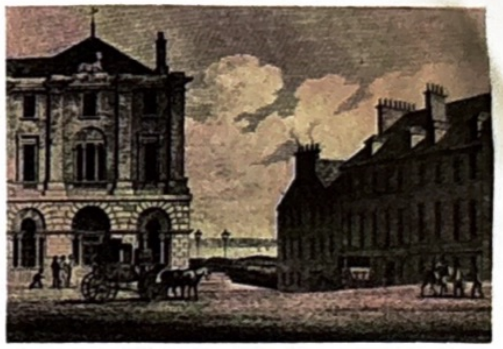
Ex-Councillor Smith, as he soon became, was quite right, but the day of reckoning was still far off, fortunately for us, so that the great schemes continued.

The growth of Edinburgh, at this time, is not only a chronicle of aesthetic achievement, it is also a chronicle of the way in which the Old Town was able to break out of its physical boundaries to make the new land part of a city structure. A structure making possible free and easy movement of people and vehicles. The parallel with many of our planning problems today is easily seen.

Each of the great constructions, made possible by Improvement Acts sponsored by the Corporation, resulted in engineering achievements. After the North Bridge; the South Bridge; the George IV Bridge; the Waterloo Place Bridge; the construction of the Mound approach to the Old Town; the building of the King's Bridge leading along the southern precipitous side of the old castle; and lastly Dean Bridge, designed by Telford in 1833 and paid for by Lord Provost John Learmonth. These bridges were complicated structures over which traffic passed, under which traffic passed. They were not just road-bridges, they were often combinations of buildings and spaces of many different uses. It is why, to this day, we may still move about the city, through a multi-level mosaic which we are only now beginning again to achieve in our older urban structures by sophisticated and immensely expensive overpasses, underpasses, clover-leafs. The structures themselves were also developed in such a way that they helped in time to pay for the capital investment which they represented.

While Craig's plan was succeeding, the strategy of development south of the town was already in 1767 doomed to failure. Uncontrolled development was taking place on the south side of the city without benefit of single ownerships of land or a visionary master plan. This part of the city became a confused, jumbled layout, more typical of British urban growth in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While this part of the town was to contain its share of notable squares and buildings, for example, George Square (**m**), built in 1766–1780 and the University, to this day it escapes that elusive and enviable quality which is the heritage of the New Town. In May 1785 the South Bridge Act was passed with the principle that any profits arising out of the new South Bridge would be allotted as a fund for a new University.

The bridge was built, and opened in July 1788. Less happily, neither the elaborate total plans prepared by Robert Adam—plans for the bridge and great colonnades of buildings around it, nor, in a very different way, the equally ambitious scheme of James Craig, were adopted. So, Edinburgh lost its one chance of having a noble and gracious link between the Old Town and its new University. For the first time the cost of compensation and acquisition of existing property became an inhibiting factor on the Council's enterprise.



(**l**) 'Though I had little personal knowledge of any other town-council there is no reason to believe that, in general, they were a whit better than that of Edinburgh. On the contrary, as Edinburgh was under the eye and the influence of higher men, the probability is that they were worse; and many of the small ones were in the lowest possible condition both of public and private morality.' In these words Lord Cockburn tempers his criticism of the town council of Edinburgh. Now that it is no longer necessary to apply a Victorian morality to their deeds, the possible achievements of the city in the last two hundred years, shine out beyond the miserable urban achievements of most of Britain's cities.

(**m**) George Square was to become for a long time the most fashionable square in Edinburgh. It was, at that time, outside the control of the city and therefore not subject to the burdens and responsibilities which faced the pioneer inhabitants of the new town, and was more quickly developed by those who wished to avoid such responsibilities.

The Nelson Monument (overleaf) was put up in 1806. It represents an inverted telescope.

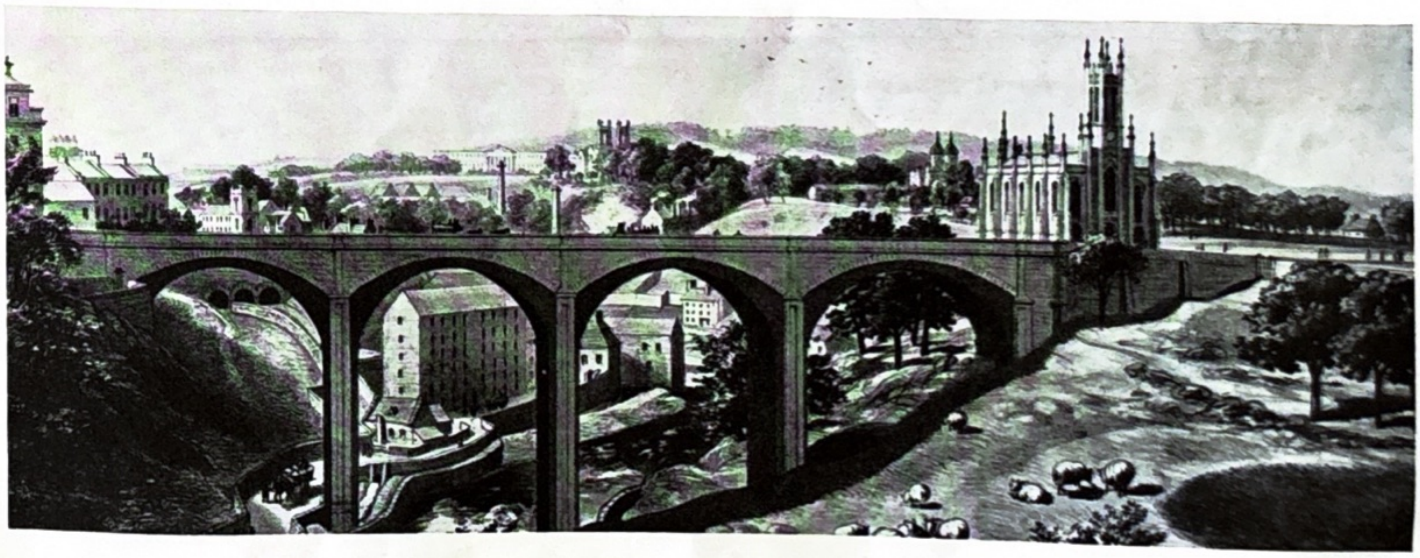
A further comment on the Waterloo Place scheme (see overleaf):

'Scarcely any sacrifice could be too great that removed the houses from the end of Princes Street, and made a level road to the hill, or, in other words, produced Waterloo Bridge.' (Cockburn)

Lord Cockburn quotes the *cost* of public objection:

'. . . we lost about £1,000. The magistrates got a fright; and the buildings stand. But much good was done by the clamour. Attention was called nearly for the first time, to the duty of maintaining the beauty of Edinburgh.'

Opposite: the Signet Library *(photo Edwin Smith)*
Above: the north-east corner of Charlotte Square (engraving)
Below: the Dean Bridge by Telford 1831; the last of the great bridge structures (watercolour). The Church is now an electrical transformer station



There are subtle differences between Adam's proposals and Craig's for the new South Bridge. Adam's plan is what one might expect from a very great architect Craig's plan is quite different, in many ways much more radical in the way in which it veres towards an understanding of what planning is; 'planning' was Craig's great ability. His 'Plan for improving the City of Edinburgh' which he published in 1786 is proof of this. He talks of controlling the flow of traffic.

'The first circumstance which will probably strike the eye in this plan is the range of buildings in the form of an octagon at the entry of the Bridge from the High Street. The reason for this part of the design was to prevent the accidents to which both carriage and foot-passengers would be liable if the entry to so great a thoroughfare was at right angles to the High Street, for it will be obvious that neither coachmen nor foot-passengers can be sufficiently on their guard to avoid the danger of running foul of the carriages they may meet with at the corners and in consequence they will be liable not only to continual interruption but in all probability to many unhappy accidents.'

Craig's intention was to provide an elegant approach to the Old Town. Part of the elaborate octagons and crescents which he formed or proposed was to consist of what we might now call a multi-use wholesale market area which would have been built on the site of the present *Scotsman* building.

'It is surely of importance to the public and convenient for all ladies and servants that the public markets should be all contiguous, besides the present situation is centrical both to the Old and New Town.'

Craig goes on far beyond the original brief for preparing the submission for the South Bridge, and he describes a ring road.

'The only opening for a ready access to Lauriston and places adjacent to the South Bridge appears to me to commence at Bristo Street.'

'I should further propose that this road should be carried along eastwards . . . to the north of the Royal Academy, across the Pleasance, run along St. John's Hill, intersect the road leading to St. Leonard's Hill, through the Duke's Walk and join the Musselburgh road. . . . I would humbly suggest farther, that a road should be carried upon the south side of the Calton Hill, which would complete the circle, and make an elegant road round the city.'

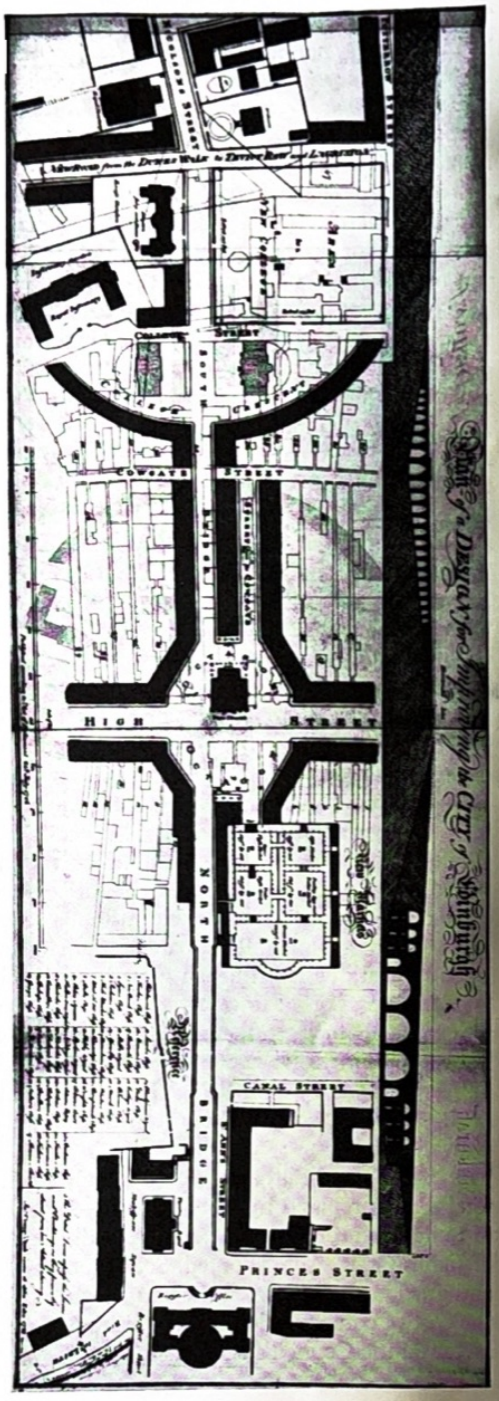
He describes landscape design and parkland uses for the city:

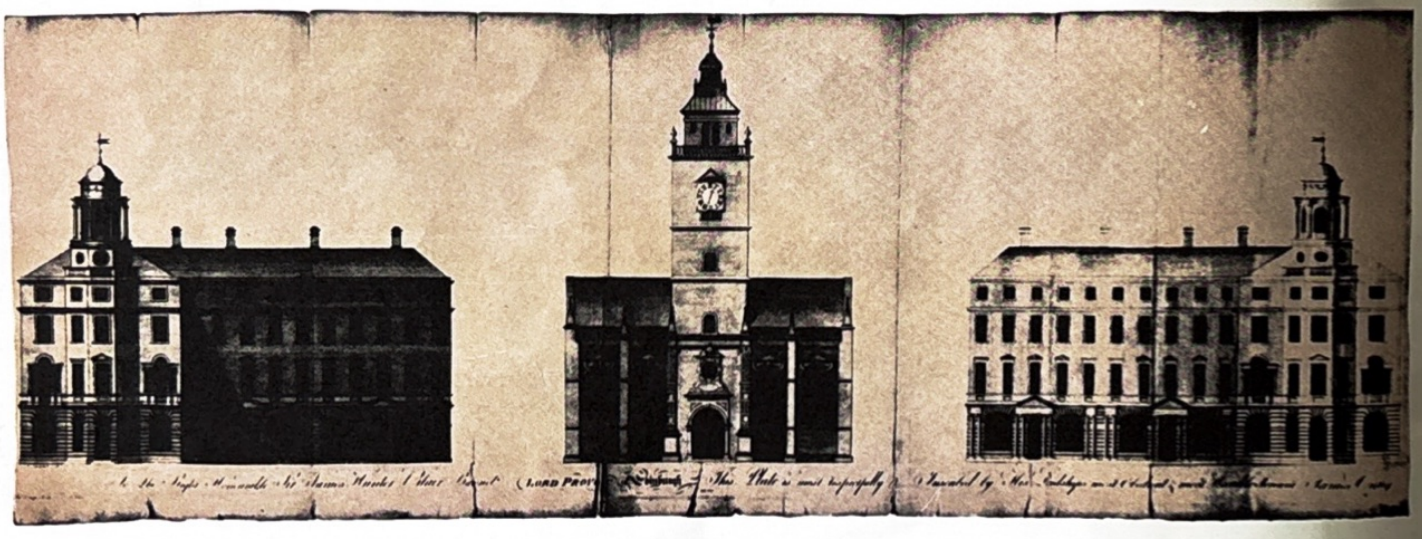
'I have walked over the course of this road which is the most picturesque and elegant there possibly can be to any city whatever. And to make it still more beautiful, clumps of plantings would greatly embellish the scene on the south side of Calton Hill, and the north side of Arthur's Seat. At the foot of this hill by St. Andrew's Chapel, there are springs of fine water which are allowed to run into the kennel and are wasted. At very small expense a fine sheet of water may be made, which might afford some pleasure to the angler in summer and exercise to the skater in winter.

'I have only to add that this design was made before I knew that Mr. Robert Adam, Architect of London, had made out a design. I exceedingly respect the great abilities of that distinguished architect and hope that it will not be thought presumptuous of me to suggest my humble ideas of the proper mode of ornamenting the metropolis of Scotland where I was born.'

Possibly Adam could afford to have his plan discarded but for Craig this must surely have been his final disappointment. The city was not yet ready for such a wider vision of planning.

In the second half of the 18th century, the University already had a thousand





students. Proposals to build a new University were made in 1785. The foundation stone was laid two years later and a public subscription started.

'*Whereas the buildings in the University of Edinburgh are extremely mean and inconvenient, some of them in a very ruinous condition, and all of them unsuitable to the flourishing state of that seminary of learning in which not only a great part of the youth of Scotland, but many students from different places in the British dominions as well as from foreign countries, are educated, and whereas a plan for building a new University has been prepared by Robert Adam Esquire of London, Architect, which has met with general approbation.*'

The building of the 'new University' was to prove a long and arduous task. Robert Adam died in 1792. The Napoleonic Wars started in 1793. Construction work was stopped and there was a grave risk that the incomplete building would become ruinous. The thirteen hundred students had to wait until 1815 when the Government Grant made it possible to complete the great building.

Nine architects submitted plans in competition and William Playfair's plan was selected, probably because of all the competitors he retained the spirit and mass of Adam's original design. The result is possibly, to this day, Edinburgh's finest building, marred only by its lack of an elegant setting within the framework of the city which either Craig's or Adam's original proposals would have secured for it, and by a strangely incomplete and mean quadrangle design which is now a dreary parking space.

Other great buildings were also built in the city. The old buildings of the Supreme Courts of Scotland, in Parliament Square by St. Giles Cathedral, were modernised by the architects Robert Reid and William Stark. Inside was built the magnificent Signet Library. And a 'feudal fortress of romance', the new jail, was put up on the prominent Calton hillside, dominating both the Old and New Towns, and now replaced by a lugubrious government building.

The Waterloo Bridge extended Princes Street around the base of Calton Hill. It is a giant structure built partly on solid rock, partly on clay over sandy gravel.

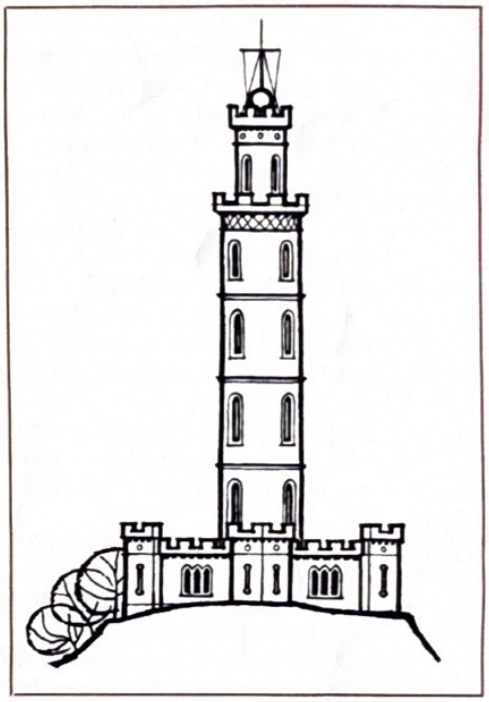
It is 1815, the whole administration of building this bridge is more complicated, more sophisticated. As with the previous great projects Commissioners are appointed to supervise the work, but now a much wider cross-section of the community is selected to serve. It is no longer easy to buy the land; it is no longer easy to build without comment; there is much greater interference by an informed public; there are all sorts of aesthetic considerations which become part of the plan: ideas of views, of landscape, of style, of taste, of the appearance of buildings to be built about the Waterloo Bridge.

By now free enterprise considered it quite appropriate to make money out of and to exploit the happy accident of ownership of the site for the bridge. Also for the first time, at Calton Hill there are records of the great involvement of the Scottish Banks in financing the public works. The final account for the Waterloo Bridge has a total, no longer in thousands or tens of thousands, but of a quarter of a million pounds.

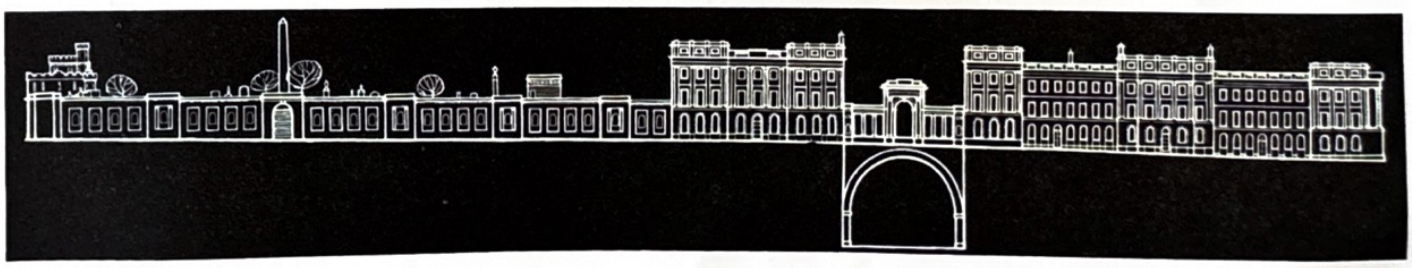
'*The new street along the southern side of Calton Hill disclosed some glorious prospects. One of these was the view westward over the North Bridge but we had only begun to perceive its importance when the inception of what are now called the North Bridge buildings raised our indignation and we thought that the Magistrates, who allowed them to be set going in silence, had betrayed us. We were very angry and had recourse to another of those new things called Public Meetings which we were beginning to feel the power of.*'

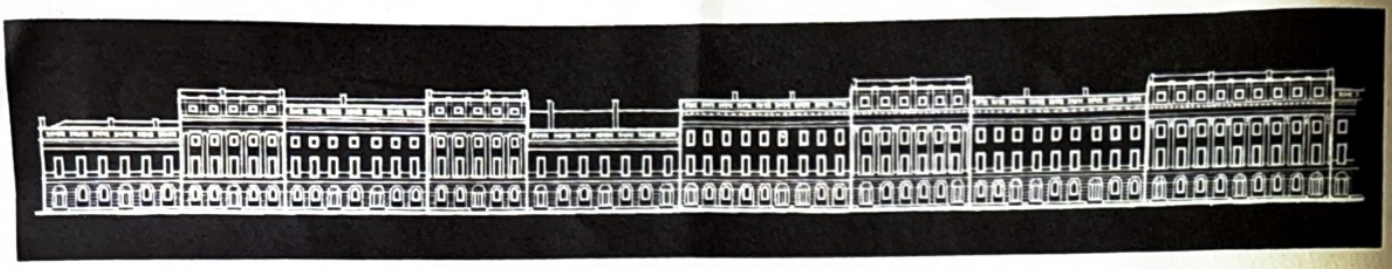
So Cockburn remembered in his memoirs. The views of the objectors were sustained. As a result recently completed buildings were demolished because they interfered with the view!

Craig's plan of the New Town had been substantially built by the beginning of the 19th century, that is except for Charlotte Square where building was to continue until 1822, when Reid designed the great St. George's Church forming the terminal feature of the George Street axis.



Opposite: plan and elevations for the South Bridge Scheme by James Craig, 1786
Top: elevation for the east front of the New University by Robert Adam, 1791
Above: the Nelson Monument by Robert Burn, 1806
Below: view of Lord Nelson's monument from Princes Street in 1806—drawn by Nasmyth before Waterloo Place Bridge (Regent Bridge) was built and showing the then new buildings which were later demolished
Bottom: Waterloo Place by Elliot 1815 with Regent Bridge and on the left the screen to the Calton Burial Ground





The first quarter of the 19th century was remarkable for the way in which the intentions of the original plan were added to and rounded off by large private developments, making up what we now identify as the New Town of Edinburgh.

These were first, the great range of buildings built north of Queen Street from Drummond Place to Royal Circus, designed by Reid and Sibbald in 1802 and quickly built between 1803 and 1823. Secondly the lands of the Earl of Moray which extended westward of Royal Circus and included the truly magnificent Moray and Ainslie Places. Both these schemes were carried out in their entirety and are remarkable in the way in which they are built in the spirit of Craig's original plan and add to the total dignity of his concept. These later layout plans only lack the advantage of Craig's unique site (**n**).

The architectural brilliance of Gillespie Graham's work for the Earl of Moray remains the crown of achievement of Edinburgh's New Town, but the work of Reid and Sibbald is equally memorable for the achievement of such high standards of planning and architecture.

The success of these and other subsequent additions was maintained because of the more stringent regulations which were made by the private developers and by the private trustees. They did not pander to the lowest common denominator; they might easily have done so.

'*The Earl of Moray has done everything in his power, consistent with his own interest, to render the plan ornamental to the City and convenient for the inhabitants.*' (**o**).

There was greater use of combined elevations. A complete elevation for Heriot Row was made, but yet there was, again, an increase in the variety, originality and sophistication of internal space arrangements. All this was satisfactorily controlled by contracts between the owners of the land, the developers and the City of Edinburgh.

These regulations were far from being dictatorial. Variations in decoration, design of doors and windows were allowed yet a total combined effect was achieved. The regulations themselves were far more complicated than those originally made for Craig's New Town. Both for Reid and Sibbald's layout and for the Earl of Moray's layout they increasingly placed the onus for achievement of standards on the individuals who had come to live in the houses. They became involved through their hearts and through their pockets in their new environment.

Growing out of these two schemes were further extensions, westward and northward. Westward, again another private development of what we know as the West End. Northward, north-eastward, on the lands opened up by the Waterloo Bridge on Calton Hill. Neither of these schemes was to be carried out in its entirety and they remain to this day the fringe, outer limits of the central, outward growing influence of Craig's original New Town plan. Regent and Royal Terrace, Playfair's noble design, now grace Calton Hill. But the total scheme between there and Leith was not completed (**p**). Time and money ran out.

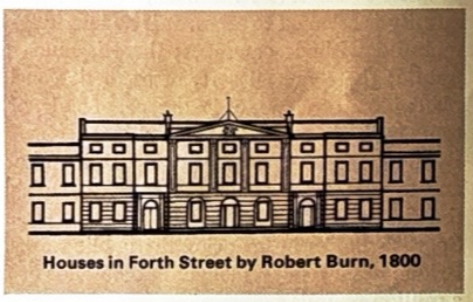
In less ambitious ways the example of Craig's plan and the architecture which was created by the plan was spread farther and wider. The painter, Raeburn, was to develop on land north of Stockbridge what might now be called 'garden suburbs', Dean Street, Ann Street and Raeburn Place.

To the south of the town there were to be pockets of well-mannered street architecture, local environment was still being made well into the 19th century with the manners and skill of the 18th. There were to be unique developments of suburban architecture remarkable for the way in which privacy, street architecture, street landscape have been moulded into making new environment. But as the 19th century passed so there was to be a final weakening in the original disciplined plan, in effort, taste and intention; money to spend on public development dwindled or was directed elsewhere, and when the affair of developing the Leith Docks finally bankrupted the Town Council of Edinburgh in 1833, it marked the end of the great 'planning period'.

We have said little about the characters and personalities who inhabited the New Town. The community quickly established itself, there being 40,000 of them in the

Top: Royal Terrace by W. H. Playfair 1819
Above: Moray Place in 1829 (engraving by T. H. Shepherd)
Bottom: Royal Circus in 1830 (engraving by T. H. Shepherd)
Opposite: William Playfair's University Library
(photo Edwin Smith)

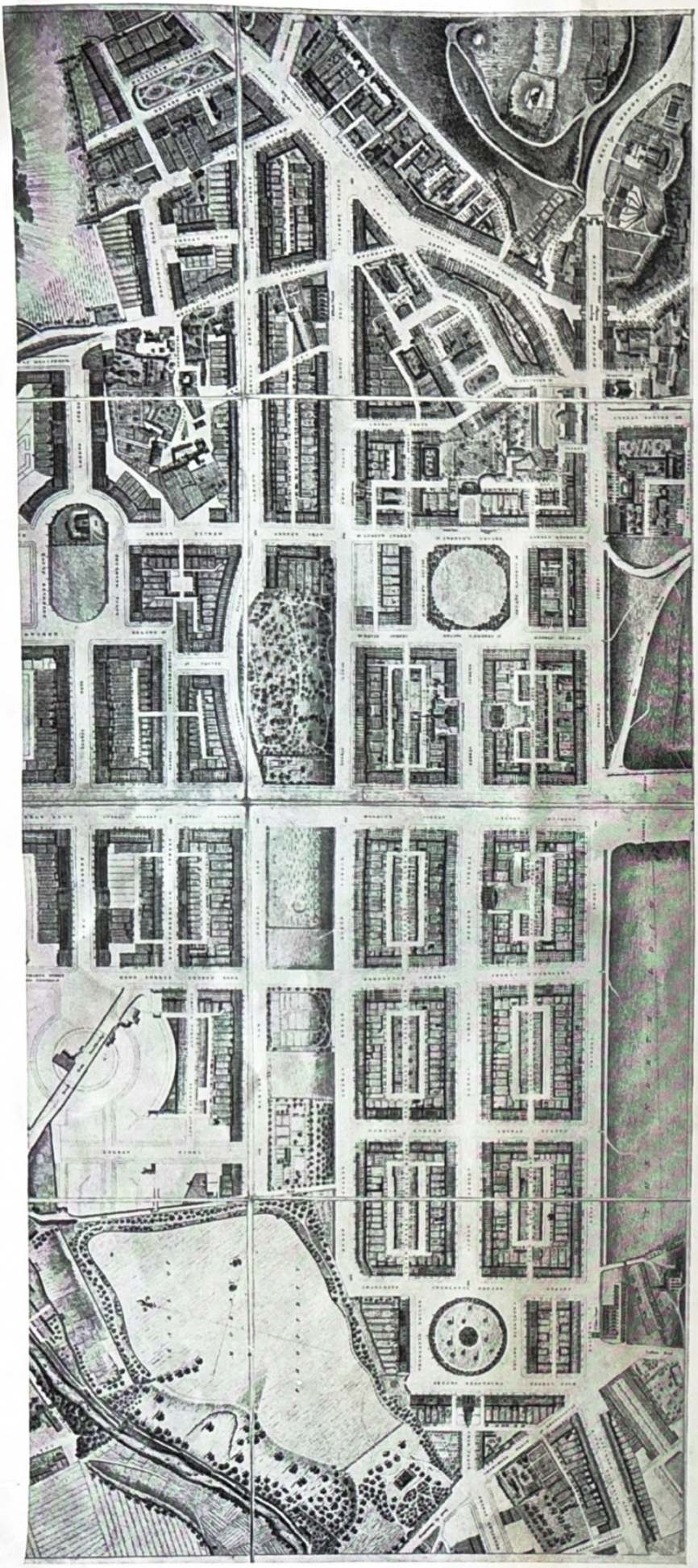
(n) The 'West End' development to a feu plan by Gillespie Graham preceded the 'Moray development' but it was always to be a fringe development.



Houses in Forth Street by Robert Burn, 1800

(o) 'It was about this time that the Earl of Moray's ground to the north of Charlotte Square began to be broken up for being built on . . . it was the beginning of a sad change, as we then felt. It would be some consolation if the buildings were worthy of the situation; but the northern houses are turned the wrong way and everything is sacrificed to the multiplication of feuing feet.' (Cockburn)

(p) William Stark 'the best modern architect that Scotland had produced' died a young man in 1813. His intentions for extending the New Town south of Calton Hill towards Leith were carried on by his pupil, Playfair. He caught the imagination of his patrons in his interpretation of the need to incorporate 'landscape



aesthetics' in his plan. These new principles, lauded by Cockburn as well as by the Commissioners responsible for the plan—'*The principles had given universal satisfaction*'—were those then accepted by fashionable architects in England. They were not complimentary to Craig's plan.

'*To a stranger occupied in the examination of the present New Town, it would import little to be informed, when looking along George's Street, that it is precisely parallel to Princes Street and Queen's Street; or, if admiring Charlotte Square, to be told that it forms the exact counterpart upon the ground plan to St. Andrew's Square.*'

But today these are subtle qualities which we now admire, set against a quality of town landscape. Stark's principles contained faults from his misunderstanding of the *picturesque*, which have regrettably been perpetuated to this day in some of our 'New Town plans.' But on one important point Stark deserves to be honoured: which is the role which town trees and planting have in making great cities. Still, too often, '*we massacre every town tree that comes in a Mason's way, no apology is thought necessary for destroying a tree—many for preserving it.*' (Cockburn) or '*there is often little perception of the beauty of street trees*' (Arnot)

Craig's *architectural* idea of town landscape probably did not extend beyond formal canals, gravel paths and bay trees. But the prints we use of Moray Place and Royal Circus show a satisfactory modification of ideals. These young trees have now grown to become gracious compliments to the Squares and gardens we now know and cherish. We still lament, however, the loss of the street trees on the south side of Princes Street between the Royal Scottish Academy and the West End, cut down in the late 19th Century.

(q) Lord Cockburn's 'Memorials of his Time' is the outstanding and *readable* social commentary of Life in Edinburgh, but here are some amusing extracts from *Fugitive Pieces*, by William Creech.

'In 1763, people of quality and fashion lived in houses which in 1783 are inhabited by tradesmen and people in humble and ordinary life.

'In 1763 there was no such profession known as perfumer; barbers and wig-makers were numerous and were in the order of decent burgesses, hairdressers were few and hardly permitted to dress on Sundays and many of them declined it.

'In 1783 perfumers had splendid shops in every principal street, some of them advertised the keeping of bears, to kill occasionally for greasing of ladies' and gentlemen's hair, as superior to any other animal fat. Hairdressers are more than tripled in number and their busiest day is Sunday, and there is a professor who advertises a Hair Dressing Academy and lectures on that noble and useful art.

'In 1763 there was no such thing known or used as an umbrella, but an eminent surgeon, who had occasion to run about much in the course of business, made use of one about the year 1780, and in 1783 umbrellas are almost as frequent as shoes and stockings and many umbrella warehouses are opened.

'Although the North Bridge was not built in 1763, yet ever since it has been built, the open banisters have been complained of. Yet in 1783 passengers continued to be blown from the pavement into the mud in the middle of the Bridge.

'In 1763 it was fashionable to go to church. People were interested about religion. Sunday was strictly observed by all ranks as a day of devotion, and it was disgraceful to be seen on the streets during the time of public worship. Families attended church with their children and servants and family worship was frequent.

'In 1783 attendance on church is much neglected, Sunday is made a day of relaxation. Families think it ungenteel to take their domestics to church with them. The streets are often crowded in the time of worship, and in the evenings they are shamefully loose of rioters. Family worship is almost totally disused and is even wearing out among the clergy.

'In no respect are the manners of 1763 and 1783 more remarkable than in the modesty and decency, reserve, dignity and delicacy of one period compared with the looseness, dissipation, forwardness, freedom and debauchery of the other. People now cease to blush at what would formerly have been reckoned a crime.'

But by 1840 . . . .

'I shall say nothing about the terrible Scottish Sunday, in comparison with which London's resembles a pleasure party. This day designed to honour Heaven is the best image of Hell that I have ever seen on Earth. "Let's not go so fast", said a Scotsman to a French friend of his, while returning from Church; "people might think we are just taking a walk".' (Stendhal)

Right: the living-room of New Town house today and top right: a New Town interior—the staircases are very grand *(photos Edwin Smith)*
Far right: some of the inhabitants of the New Town from Crombie's 'Modern Athenians'
Left: Part of a plan with elevations of the New Town by Kirkwood 1819

1830s. The new houses and wide streets modified a way of life, but the old town was close enough to humanise the new place, so the particular delights of both places were there to be shared equally.

The centre piece of our celebration is a great street in the New Town. Behind the elegant Georgian facade you can see 18th century acquisitiveness for furniture, paintings, baubles displayed. In the street there are strange eccentric character cut-out models, taken from Crombie's 'Modern Athenians' and Kay's 'Original Portraits' and caricature etchings. The ladies are conspicuous by their absence (but visiting writers speak kindly of their beauty and worldliness) (**q**).

The best contemporary opinion of social change at this time is in the writings of William Creech, a publisher, who came to live in No.5 George Square from the Old Town. He kept up a spirited correspondence in the newspapers by writing to them under one pseudonym and replying to himself under another. He contrasted the years of 1763 and 1783—but remember he was twenty years older, and forty years later Stendhal was to suggest a quite different turn of events!

The New Town became socially dominant in the city. Solid middle class or becoming so, the social barriers seemed less brutal than they were in England at that time; professional men, business men, tradesmen, country landowners, but most erudite of all, men of learning, letters, religion and law. Read their memoirs to understand what they thought of it all. Apart from the talk, what is remembered is the lighter moments of dinners, dances, routs and supper parties. For the favoured it was a good place to stay, and this pattern has survived to 1967.

What *sort* of houses were built in the New Town? The tradition of the Old Town had been for a very particular mixture of class and form of living. The old Lands had contained all sorts and conditions of families, of the rich and the very poor, living cheek by jowl.

The advantage, or so it seemed, to those who lived in Edinburgh at the time of the New Town, was the light and air and space, also the ability to express more satisfactorily their social position and intentions by building. Yet the New Town of Edinburgh was not to grow as a vulgar manifestation of a rising middle class. What pretention there was was contained within the orderly structure of the New Town; certainly there were more larger and grand houses, yet at the same time there were smaller houses. Behind the squares and crescents more modest blocks, mews flats and stables were erected.

Houses were built in terraces; even the grandest house, and there were few of them, was part of a terrace. There was as yet no mania for the detached dwelling or semi-detached, but there was adequate sound insulation. What is more many of the great blocks were not single houses but were designed as flats, and apartments, 'main-door' flats with their front door leading out on to the street. Underneath there might be a small shop with restricted covenants as to its use (not to be a fleshing shop, undertaker or a shop to sell drink).

To the right of the main-door of the ground floor flat there would be a common stair-flat-door which with its unique Edinburgh lock, gave access to individual doors of houses within the structure. Above might be one, two, three, four or five separate houses, built one upon the other.

Edinburgh in the 19th Century. Extracts from a book by W. M. Gilbert published by J. & R. Allen, Edinburgh, 1901.

1822 Princes Street lights with gas.

1824 The Royal Botanic Gardens moved to its present site.

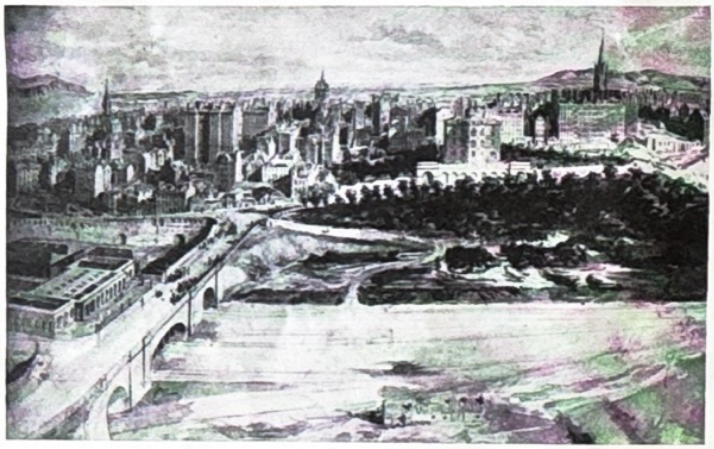
1826 The Salisbury Crags bought by the Government from the Earl of Haddington.

1828 'The Progress of Edinburgh, figures given in an Edinburgh newspaper. 1 Royal Palace, 1 College, 31 Professors, 1 Riding School, 1 Military Academy, 700 Teachers, 1 Royal Exchange, 70 Churches, 2 Theatres, 13 Courts of Justice, 400 Advocates, 800 Writers to the Signet, 86 Accountants, 40 Physicians, 70 Surgeons, 100 Apothecaries, 7 Libraries, 42 Insurance Offices, 11 Public Hospitals, 60 Charitable Institutions, 25 Literary Societies, 80 Royal Mail and Stage Coaches, 86 Hackney Coaches, 400 Carriers (Sedan Chairmen), 80 public houses.'

1847 Professor J. Y. Simpson announces discovery of Chloroform.

1861 The Time Gun at the Castle fired from the Nelson Monument by an electrical arrangement.

1864 The last public execution in Edinburgh.



Left: four watercolour sketches of Edinburgh made by Joseph W. Ebsworth from the top of the Scott Monument 1846 and 1847 Above: the Scott Monument by Kemp 1846; 64 statuettes and Sir Walter Scott and his dog

The Mound—above: the Royal Institution (now R.S.A. Gallery) by Playfair 1823 and 1833; below: the National Gallery by Playfair 1850

What does this New Town contribute to the image of Edinburgh today?

The Old Town was memorable for the mixture of social classes which it contained. This principle was not entirely lost in the New Town and existed until very recent years. Only now are some of the smaller houses fallen into disrepair and alas for the inhabitants, they are removed from the New Town into *schemes* in the suburbs.

In the 19th century the new town matured, for its development coincided with ever increasing aesthetic confidence by those who spent money on building and on space about building. Standards of landscape design were high in this century, so the great squares and gardens were made and planted in the New Town. Keys gave access to those who had paid to make the gardens, as they do to this day to the beautiful Queen Street gardens, now at the peak of their perfection and importance in the visual appearance of the New Town.

In this way, the Princes Street gardens were made. Craig's plan had shown a formal canal layout separating the Old from the New Town. This was never carried out and by 1817 while building had been prevented on the south side of Princes Street, only the great earthen mound formed of spoil excavated from the new buildings had been formed. The gardens of Princes Street were laid out to a design by James Skene in 1821, 'an amateur painter and man of taste', as a result of a Corporation Act which safeguarded the whole length of Princes Street from development but which imposed a duty on the proprietors to 'improve' the land.

City embellishment continued. The understanding of picturesque views of the contrast between architecture and landscape was universally shared and worked for. It had fortunately taken a long time to get here but the influence of Claude and Poussin was significant. The Temple of Theseus was a school, there was an uncompleted Parthenon on Calton Hill. Two more Greek Temples on the Mound, street statues, trees, churches, halls...and the Scott Monument. From the top of which the artist Ebsworth made the four sketches we have reproduced from the Huntly House Museum collection. It is of an Edinburgh we can just recognise, and it records the one major intrusion of that age, the Waverley Railway Station.

We have described the way in which classical Edinburgh was built. We have freely interpreted the actions of a community which expressed itself by making a city landscape. This fusing together of intellect, motive, interest and endeavour which by happy accident coincided with a golden age of British Design.

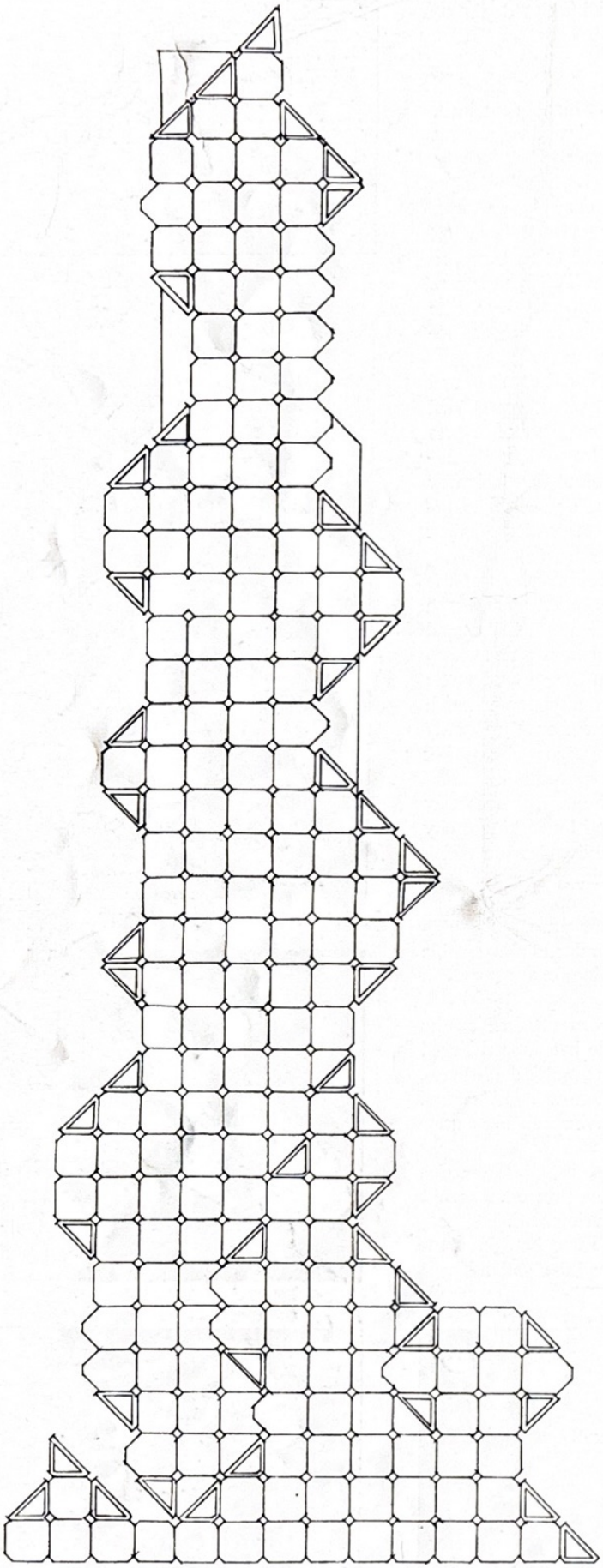
Thus we try to observe past history in the belief that the example must not go unnoticed by those who now work to change the 'ecology' of our city.

Apart from 'how it came to be built', we need also to seek to understand a possible future... Historical buildings are listed and 'preserved'. How does one 'preserve' a whole town?

We can because its dignity and environment has not yet been ravished by the greedy or envious, and its use is still as a place where people live. Its privileged inhabitants are close to the heart of a capital city. They in turn give life to that city. So far the vitality of the New Town plan has survived its own growth and success. But now the spectrum of influences which work against its survival as a place grow stronger and more pressing.

If it is to survive as a place where people live, it must have absolute protection against passing road traffic and commuter parking. It must have protection against further attrition by commercial colonisation and inferior redevelopment.

Should not continuity and responsibility for its future be shared between those who live there and the city whose priceless inheritance it is—and the Nation?



Elevation drawing of prefabricated multi-storey housing unit

'. . . The essential purpose of this exhibit is to show the necessity . . . and the fruitfulness of studying the geography and history of your town before trying to make plans either for future growth or to correct past mistakes.
For natural environment cannot be neglected by either architect, engineer, or politician without long enduring penalties.'

Patrick Geddes (1854–1932) spoke these words from the Outlook Tower in the Old Town of Edinburgh in 1910, when he explained his Edinburgh Town Planning Exhibition. 40 years later these beliefs helped to form the great Civic Survey and Plan made for Edinburgh by the late Sir Patrick Abercrombie.

But can we imagine a future City of Edinburgh? Has the moment now come for the PROPOSALS of 1967 to be written—and then for some bold plan to be commissioned? A plan which the City can believe in and strive towards; and achieve year after year—a *modern* plan. Should we any longer sigh over the departure of former days, and always grumble at change?

What might a truly new plan for the City look like? Might it not be strange, different and dynamic, as Craig's plan must have seemed to those whose only experience of living was the old confined town of 1767? Would this new plan not have to offend old ideas of planning, of present-day conventions, boundaries, even sometimes 'our rights', and be optimistic, fresh, hopeful for the continued greatness of the City? Cherishing the old, creating the new, and condemning the second rate—of which we have had enough in recent years.

What image might this new—New Town of Edinburgh have, balanced as it must be against its older sections? To us it might be coarse, uncomfortable, disturbing, having strange mixtures of light, shape and sound. Yet for our children it might become an expression of a new identity and self-confidence in the City.

Man has the ability to control and adjust his environment; then a capacity to modify and in turn to be modified by that environment. Only so much can we see clearly. Some essential principles of city making we can learn from the past; others we may not perceive in all their consequences. Each age creates its own values and priorities. Let some of these be directed to making better Cities.

'The future of this City concerns not merely us, as its present citizens, but our successors, and very many sons and daughters of Scotland all over the world who hold it enshrined in their hearts. It is therefore a trust which calls for our most careful consideration.'

Sir John Ireland Falconer
Lord Provost of Edinburgh, 1945–1948.

PLAN
of
THE CITY OF
EDINBURGH
Including all the Latest
AND INTENDED IMPROVEMENTS
Edinburgh
1820
Engraved by Chas. Thomson
HIGH STREET
QUEEN STREET
GEORGE STREET
PRINCES STREET
YORK PLACE
ROYAL TERRACE
LONDON STREET
PLAYFAIR STREET
MEADOWS OR HOPE PARK